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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIRUT 002767

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NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MARCHESE/HARDING

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON : PM SINIORA ON DONORS CONFERENCE,  
ARMISTICE AGREEMENT, ARMS SMUGGLING, HARIRI TRIBUNAL

REF: A. STATE 139905

[1](#)B. STATE 140003

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason: 1.4 (d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (S) In an August 25 conversation with the Ambassador, Prime Minister Siniora revealed Lebanon's tentative delegation list, plans, and priorities for next week's Stockholm Conference on assistance to Lebanon. Siniora maintained that the 1949 Armistice Agreement should be revived and form the framework for a border settlement between Lebanon and Israel. He reported that the GOL is ready to accept German assistance (but not monitoring) in combatting arms smuggling, and that the legal ground was ready for the formation of a special tribunal in the assassination of former PM Hariri. End Summary.

Stockholm Conference  
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[1](#)2. (U) The Ambassador and pol/econ chief called on Prime Minister Fouad Siniora August 25 to present Ref (A) demarche and discuss other current issues. The PM was accompanied by Advisor Rola Nouredine and Senior Advisor Mohamed Chattah, former Lebanese Ambassador to Washington and current member of the GOL Reconstruction Committee.

[1](#)3. (C) Nouredine and Chattah, who are both attending the Stockholm Conference, offered a preliminary list of the other GOL delegates:

- Nabil Jisr, the new chief of the Council for Development Reconstruction (CDR);
- Ghassan Taher, Advisor to the Prime Minister;
- Ziad ("Alex") Hayek, Advisor to the Prime Minister;
- Jihad Azour, Minister of Finance
- Sami Haddad, Minister of Economy and Trade
- Nayla Mouawad, Minister of Social Affairs and Development
- Fawzi Salloukh, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Yaacoub Sarraf, Minister of Environment
- Mohammed Safadi, Minister of Public Works

Nouredine warned that the list was not yet complete and would likely be broadened to ensure a balance of confessional

affiliations. In addition to Lebanese officials, Geneva-based UN official Ross Mountain is expected to accompany the Lebanese delegation.

¶4. (C) As for GOL priorities in Stockholm, Chattah said that he expects to receive a draft list tonight, which he will circulate more widely on August 28. Chattah said the priorities document will place crisis needs in the context of larger needs. In addition to the priorities list, the GOL presentation will include a pledge form, a powerpoint presentation, and a "little movie." Finally, the PM is preparing a speech for the Conference.

¶5. (C) Chattah noted that the GOL is sending a message that the Stockholm Conference "is not the grand donors coordination meeting but is just an appetizer" which will focus on urgent and humanitarian needs.

¶6. (C) The Ambassador's inquiry on who should be the principal GOL point of contact for donor coordination sparked some discussion among the PM and his advisors. The PM suggested that all coordination could flow between Chattah and his other advisor Ziad ("Alex") Hayek, but after some back and forth the group appeared to decide that the new Council for Development and Reconstruction head Nabil El Jisr should serve as principal GOL point of contact for donor coordination.

¶7. (SBU) The PM and his advisors listened carefully as the Ambassador laid out Ref (A) points on the \$230 million humanitarian, reconstruction and security assistance to Lebanon package. They noted the breakdown of the package's components and asked for clarifications. In addition, they

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seemed aware of the 25,000 metric ton grain shipment to be delivered to Lebanon. The PM expressed his appreciation for the U.S. help in ensuring that Lebanon continues to enjoy at least a one-month supply of fuel for electricity generation.

#### Armistice Agreement and Political Settlement

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¶8. (S) The Ambassador noted recent statements in the Council of Ministers referring to the 1949 Armistice Agreement between Israel and Lebanon and said that the Agreement, in Israel's view, had been abrogated by the 1969 Lebanon-PLO Cairo Agreement. The PM responded that the Cairo Agreement itself was made null and void during the period following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, rendering, in his view, the Armistice Agreement once more in effect.

¶9. (S) Furthermore, GOL legal advisors had analyzed the Armistice Agreement and believed that the annex regarding limitations on numbers of troops allowed to deploy in the border zone could be applied to the part of the Blue Line along the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights (which was not envisioned as part of the original Armistice agreement). Chattah hopes that the UN Security Council addresses the issue of the Shebaa Farms soon, and noted that if the area is not placed under UN trusteeship, then the Armistice Agreement may apply to the Israeli forces in that area.

¶10. (S) The Ambassador asked how the GOL expects to gain Israeli acceptance of reapplying a modified version of the Agreement. The PM responded that he would talk to UN Secretary-General Annan and try to convince him to talk to

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the Israelis. The UN Secretary-General, Siniora added, is the "only credible go-between on this issue" for Lebanon and Israel. (Comment: It is unclear whether Siniora meant to suggest that the USG could not be trusted as an honest broker. End Comment.) The PM stressed the importance of the Agreement as a framework for border security, asking "if there is no Armistice then there is a peace treaty or there

is war -- what else is there?"

#### Arms Smuggling

11. (S) The PM noted that in his latest conversation with the Secretary, he learned that the U.S. is keenly interested in

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Lebanese enforcement of border controls and customs. He suggested that USG officials could be in touch with the Ministry of Finance to monitor and assist with the efforts of the Customs Service (which reports to the Ministry of Finance) to combat smuggling. The PM noted that in the previous day's Council of Ministers Meeting, the Council had voted to "empower" the Prime Minister to ask the German government for assistance in equipping and training the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) or whomever the PM should designate in order to combat smuggling at Lebanon's "land and sea borders." When pressed, the PM and his advisors allowed that the Beirut International Airport is included in this mandate, although there remained some ambiguity -- perhaps linguistic -- over whether the "air border" is specifically captured in the Council's decision. At any rate, the PM's plans as he described them appeared to include the installation of scanning equipment at the airport as well as customs outposts on the border crossings and at seaports. Post will follow up on these details with the Finance Ministry, LAF and other agencies as appropriate. PM Siniora made it clear that he did not expect the Germans to monitor or control the borders, which would be left to the Lebanese.

12. (S) Pressed for details regarding the GOL's communications with the Germans, the PM said that he had already asked Chancellor Merkel for assistance and received a positive reply. The GOL planned to transmit a letter or diplomatic note to the GOG today (which we saw in draft form being passed between Chattah and the PM). Chattah, in his donor coordination role, clarified that any anti-smuggling assistance received from other countries would be separate from those countries' UNIFIL contributions and roles -- implying that UNIFIL would not be asked to take a substantial role in anti-smuggling assistance.

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#### Hariri Assassination Tribunal

13. (S) The Ambassador asked for the PM's opinion regarding a draft GOL-UN/OLA agreement necessary for the establishment of an special tribunal with international character to try suspects in the Hariri assassination (called for by UNSC Resolution 1664, ref b). He responded that he was happy with the draft agreement and that his office had "prepared all the documents needed" for the Council of Ministers and Parliament pass the agreement into Lebanese law. The GOL will await the visit of UN Legal Adviser Nicolas Michel to sign the draft agreement before presenting it to the Cabinet. When asked by the Ambassador whether the GOL is ready for the USG to push for the establishment of the tribunal, the PM responded "yes."

#### Other Remarks

14. (S) The PM said he would in all likelihood not/not be going to the UN General Assembly, given that the President will head the Lebanese delegation. When pressed, he admitted he had no desire to repeat the experience to which the Lebanese delegation had been subjected during the March Arab Summit in Khartoum.

15. (S) The PM confided that his government was facing much criticism and many difficulties. He noted especially, as he has said to the press, that he has come under fire for

allowing only a partial resumption of Middle East Airlines flights (to Amman), and told us he had threatened his critics with a cancellation of even this modest air link if they did not cease their "blackmail" of his government. He also complained of the continuing shortages of fuel, electricity and basic needs and the criticism he has faced as a result. He noted, "You live here" and can appreciate how much people are being hurt.

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